

RELIGIOUS LIFE AMONG THE CHALDEANS.

We find the following in the April number of the *Annales de Philosophie Chrétienne*. It is the continuation of an article from the pen of Eugene Boroer, an oriental traveller — *Cath. Adv.*

"Gabriel, who had scarcely recovered his health, gave up business and returned to Bagdad where he began a sort of retired and pensive life. While waiting for Providence to send him companions, he desired to unite prayer and meditation with the active service of his neighbour; an excellent method for rapidly advancing in the path of virtue, and securing more abundant graces.

"Musselman society possesses none of those institutions which charity multiplies among us for all the wants of suffering humanity; and above all, there has been no successful effort made to open asylums for the poor and infirm. Therefore, not being able to imitate many of the saints in their kind concern for the sick, he contented himself with the humble occupation of schoolmaster. He collected together a number of children, to whom he gave instructions in reading, and in the principles of the Christian doctrine. To rescue these young souls from ignorance, inspire them with the love of God, and the thought of being one day useful to their country, were the motives which encouraged his zeal.

"He entered into strict intimacy with a priest, by name *Francis*, of the province of Mossoul. As he consulted him concerning his plan of forming a convent in Chaldea, this pious friend, able to understand all the spiritual and temporal advantages of such a plan, he pointed out the solitude of *Rahban-Ormuzd* as the most suitable place of all the religious retreats established in the neighbourhood of ancient Nineveh.

"Gabriel, in consequence, departed for Mossoul, the residence of the Patriarch, in order to ask a concession of this monastery. The see was occupied by *Mar* or *Matvan Hanna*, who, having embraced the Catholic faith with Alquouch, his village, from being Nestorian primate, had become head of the Catholic church in Chaldea. His conversion, though sincere, could not remedy the vice of complete ignorance, in which all the prelates of the Nestorian church were born and reared — In consideration of his old age, and with the hope of the greater good, Rome had left him the dignity of Patriarch, which heretical custom had for ages made hereditary in his family.

"It was difficult for a superannuated Neophyte to divest himself completely of certain prejudices, to which, by domestic interests and the spirit of sect, he had been habituated.

"We have said that Nestorianism, like all other heresies, had compressed and altered all the primitive constitutions of religious life. The monasteries were sensibly converted into benefices, to be matters of dispute among the members of the higher clergy, and which the patriarch distributed as rewards among those who had contributed towards his election. The insubordination of this ecclesiastical head to

the supreme head of the church, had led him to arrogate unlimited authority; and thus religious foundations had been brought under his arbitrary jurisdiction. Soon afterwards, another constitution had determined that certain convents should be the private personal property of the patriarch, and from a fear that the religious should oppose this usurpation, it was represented to them as a privilege.

"Ambition and cupidity, omnipotent over souls which, with orthodoxy, had lost piety and respect for ecclesiastical laws, must unceasingly impel them to the destruction of the monastic life. Each convent was a parish fit to be seized, and it was a matter of interest that the religious should form no novices, the legitimate successors to their rights. The patriarchal family swallowed up all these domains, and disposed of them as if they were no longer part of the Church.

"In this way the convent of *Rahban-Ormuzd*, with all its dependencies, had fallen into the hands of *Mar Hanna* and his family. To cede it to Gabriel would have been an act of disinterestedness which nothing could have induced but a sincere love for religion, and an enlightened appreciation of the advantages which would arise from its re-establishment. Perhaps the patriarch himself would have made this sacrifice, which in itself was but a just restitution, were it not for the evil suggestions and advice of his friends. These prevailed on him to refuse. They objected that the location was not secure; that the Kurds would come and lay it waste, and at the same time offered two monasteries nearer Mossoul.

"Gabriel, who had visited these places, and recognizing the advantages of the situation of *Rahban-Ormuzd*, demanded the grant of this and obtained it. An unforeseen event aided him. The Pacha of Mossoul, a tyrant, and like all musselmans not restrained by the consul of some European power, a persecutor of Christians, at this epoch stood in need of money, and his attention was called to the Chaldean archbishop. In absence of a reasonable and legal motive, it is easy to invent pretexts and false accusations. *Mar Hanna* was therefore cast into prison, and he was unable to get out without the intervention of a Dominican father, the superior of the Catholic mission of Mossoul who consented to plead in his behalf, on condition, however, that the convent of *Rahban-Ormuzd* should be ceded to Gabriel. The Patriarch consented to this. He was liberated, but nevertheless he could not bring himself to fulfil his promise.

Gabriel retired into a small house in *Alquouch*, where, after the example of St. Paul, he supported himself with the labor of his hands, while at the same time practising the exercises of a religious life. In a little time he gained two companions — a simple laborer and a Nestorian priest who had received the grace to return to Catholic unity.

The three brethren longed to taste the sweets of retirement. Gabriel, aided by the influence of the chiefs of the village, who were affected by his good example, and having greatly at heart the success of

his good design, made new efforts to obtain the convent. He applied to the nephew of the Patriarch, the bishop of *Amadin*, who had under his spiritual jurisdiction the mountain of *Rahban-Ormuzd*. This latter, urged by his importunities, entered forthwith into negotiation with the patriarch, and without giving to Gabriel the authentic act of the concession of the place, allowed him to dwell there with those who should place themselves under his direction.

Gabriel who, with the impatient ardour of the Psalmist, asked of God wings in order to fly to the solitude, went immediately with his disciples to bury himself in the groves of *Rahban-Ormuzd*. On entering there they recited the following prayers, the inspiration of the piety of Gabriel:

"Oh Blessed Virgin! glory of the just, refuge of the faithful, crown of servants who labor, diadem of solitaries, support of the perfect, queen of confessors, mother of penitents, sign of joy and rejoicings, I implore thee, whose intercession obtains for us the graces, the blessings, and favors of God; Oh Virgin! our mistress, we thy servants beseech thee to assist and direct us. Grant that all the days of our lives our acts may be pure. Through thee, and in thee, we offer our souls to thy well beloved Son. Bless our endeavors, bless our community, and associate us to the passion of thy beloved child. Amen."

"Oh Saint Anthony! I invoke thee in offering to thee myself and my brethren, who have entered, or who shall enter, into this community. May the Virgin, our Medatrix, obtain for us that, during our whole lives, our conduct may be like to thine, and do not thou cease to guide us, as well as all those who shall persevere with me in the same purpose. Amen."

THE OXFORD TRACTARIANS.—The London Observer, in an article written by no friend of the Oxford school of divinity, says:

"Puseyism has made extraordinary progress in the church within the last three years. It is calculated that out of 12,000 clergy in England and Wales, 9000, three-fourths of the whole, are deeply tainted with it. In Scotland, again, the whole of the Episcopal clergy with the exception of three or four, are decided Puseyites. In Ireland, also, the heresy is making alarming progress. It is calculated that the majority of the Bench of Bishops are more or less deeply tinged with it. Those of the prelates who most openly advocate Puseyite principles are the Bishop of Exeter, the Bishop of London, and the Bishop of Oxford. Among the churches and chapels in London in which Puseyite practice prevails to the greatest extent, will be found in Shore-ditch church and Margaret street chapel, Oxford street.

In the latter place it would be difficult to perceive any difference between the form of worship, and that observed in the Roman Catholic Church. In many of the Puseyite churches and chapels, daily worship has been established, and in all of them, we believe, the sacrament is administered weekly.

SPAIN.—IRELAND.—Unexpectedly and in different regions matters are occurring

to accelerate Ireland's legislative independence. Louis Philippe wishes to have French influence predominant in Spain, and is determined, as we may infer from a recent speech of Guizot, to do so. England's obvious policy is to prevent such an upsetting of "the balance of power." The former will uphold the insurgents—the latter the Regent. War between France and England is, therefore imminent.—In this event, all the Frenchmen now in Ireland, engaged, according to that very competent authority, the *Tory press*, "in drilling the peasantry," will be required on the Continent, and may be easily spared from Ireland, as the more declaration of war will be repent of the Union. What next? Of course, the election of our Representatives to the Irish Parliament.—*Belfast Vindicator*.

IMPORTANT FROM THE SOCIETY ISLANDS.—The government has gone on regularly till within the last ten days, since which we have had nothing but rumours of war; and I have an idea that we shall have a serious disturbance here, if the tranquility of Europe is not disturbed by it; for you must know that about twelve years ago we had an arrival here of H. B. M. ship *Talbot*, Capt. Sir Thomas Thompson, direct from England, and of the *Boussole*, a French frigate.

Sir Thomas brought letters from the English Government to Queen Pomare, and as she was, on the arrival of the frigate, at *Morea*, he sent a boat for her to come over, as she never had been at Tahiti since the French had got possession, and hoisted their protectorate flag. But on the receipt of Sir Thomas's letter she came across in state, with the old Tahiti flag flying in her barge. She pulled directly on board the frigate, without landing, and they manned the yards and ran the old flag of Tahiti to the fore, and saluted it with twenty one guns, as they also did on her departure.

This annoyed the French greatly, so much so that they issued a protest against the proceedings of the commander of H. B. M. ship *Talbot* in hoisting and saluting the old Tahiti flag, thereby disturbing the peace and tranquility of the place, and acting directly hostile to France. Sir Thomas then requested the Queen to call a meeting of all the inhabitants on the island, to know whether it was their wish that the French should hold possession and govern the island. The meeting took place yesterday in the Queen's enclosure, and it was attended by about 10,000.

When called upon to speak they all agreed to a man in not wishing the French to remain on the island; and they all wished the Queen to allow them to go and pull down the protectorate flag; but she would not allow it. Last night however the flag was hauled down, and the signal halyards were cut away. The captain of the *Boussole* threatened to fire upon the place if the flag does not go up again, and the captain of the English frigate has threatened to fire on the Frenchman the moment a shot is fired on the town.

The tenor of the English letter to Pomare was that England would protect her against any foreign power that should encroach upon her dominions, and both frigates at present lie all ready for battle, and the Queen and most of the natives have fled to a distant part of the island.